

Message Text

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13-12

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 466

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CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE WELLINGTON 3413

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT NZ

SUBJ: NEW ZEALAND ELECTIONS

REF: WELLINGTON 3304

1. AFTER THREE WEEKS OF "MEETING THE PEOPLE" PIME
MINISTER ROWLING OFFICIALLY OPENED LABOUR PARTY ELECTION
CAMPAIGN NOVEMBER 10 WITH NATIONALLY TELEVISED FORTY
MINUTE SPEECH. FIRST HALF OF SPEECH WAS DEVOTED TO
STRONG DEFENSE OF LABOUR'S STEWARDSHIP DURING PAST
THREE YEARS WITH EMPHASIS ON ECONOMY. ROWLING MADE
NO APOLOGIES FOR LABOUR'S OVERSEAS BORROWING. RATHER,
HE DEFENDED GOVERNMENT'S SUCCESS IN MAINTAINING A HIGH
LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT. ROWLING GOT BOGGED DOWN IN DETAIL
DURING SECOND HALF OF SPEECH AS HE OUTLINED LABOUR'S
PLANS FOR AN IMPROVED PENSION PROGRAM AND FOR A
"BABY BONUS" SCHEME. LOSS OF TEMPO RESULTING FROM THIS
EFFORT KEPT PRIME MINISTER FROM OUTLINING LABOUR'S
POLICIES IN OTHER FIELDS.

2. NATIONAL AND LABOUR BOTH RELEASED MANIFESTOS
EARLY IN WEEK. AS EXPECTED, NATIONAL FOCUSED ON
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ECONOMIC ISSUES. CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF SPACE WAS

ALSO GIVEN TO SUPERANNUATION, WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND ENVIRONMENT IN LINE WITH NATIONAL'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ITS POSITION WITH VOTERS INTERESTED IN THESE TOPICS. NATIONAL'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE POLICIES CONTAIN NO SURPRISES. SUPPORT OF ANZUS "AS THE KEYSTONE OF OUR COLLECTIVE DEFENSE POLICY" IS REAFFIRMED.

3. LABOUR'S MANIFESTO IS A MUCH MORE COMPREHENSIVE DOCUMENT THAN THAT PUBLISHED BY NATIONAL. IT INDICATES LABOUR, IF ELECTED, WILL OVERHAUL OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT "TO INSURE THAT ONLY SUCH INFORMATION AS IS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE SECURITY OF THE STATE WILL BE COVERED." WITH REGARD TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS LABOUR PROMISES TO "TAKE POSITIVE MEASURES IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER WORLD FORUMS TO GAIN A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC" AND TO SUPPORT CONCEPT OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN ZONE OF PEACE, NEUTRALITY AND FREEDOM. ANZUS TREATY WILL BE MAINTAINED.

4. NOVEMBER 6 ELECTION FORECAST PUBLICATION BY WELL RESPECTED BERL CONSULTING GROUP PREDICTS THREE SEAT PARLIAMETARY MAJORITY FOR LABOUR. BERL, WHICH IS PRIMARILY INVOLVED IN BUSINESS FORECASTS, IS RELATIVELY CONSERVATIVE ORGANIZATION AND HAS A FORMER NATIONAL PARTY GENERAL DIRECTOR AS ONE OF THE SENIOR PARTNERS. BERL DISCOUNTS IMPACT OF MINOR PARTIES, PREDICTING THEY WILL OBTAIN LESS THAN TEN PERCENT OF VOTE. OVERALL, BERL EXPECTS VOTE TO SWING THREE PERCENT TOWARD NATIONAL PARTY.

5. WHILE DRAMATIC AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS ARE BEING FOLLOWED CLOSELY, PARTICULARLY WITH RESEPECT TO THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS, AT THIS JUNCTURE IT DOES NOT APPEAR THAT MANY NEW ZEALANDERS ARE GOING TO BE SWAYED IN THEIR VOTING BY EVENTS ACROSS THE TASMAN.
SELDEN

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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